

## PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE RANGITIKEI LAND DISPUTE.

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### No. 1.

MEMORANDUM BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF WELLINGTON FOR THE COLONIAL SECRETARY.

In my Memorandum of the 18th of February last,\* I detailed fully the measures I had adopted to prevent a collision between the Ngatiapas on the one side, and the Ngatiraukawas and the Rangitanes on the other, and also the arrangements I had made with a view to the ultimate adjustment of the long pending Rangitikei land dispute.

\*Sessional Papers,  
1864, E.—No. 3.  
p. 36.

To render my present report intelligible it is simply necessary to remind you that after holding several meetings with them, and failing to induce them to agree to a compromise, I gave them to understand that the Queen's government would not permit any fighting, that it was determined to preserve the peace, and protect all Her Majesty's subjects whether Pakchas or Maoris, and that whichever of the three tribes engaged in the dispute dared to fire a shot or strike the first blow, would be regarded as in arms against Her Majesty and punished accordingly: that as neither party would agree to the proposals of the other, I insisted upon their retiring from the disputed block, each tribe leaving only a sufficient number to look after its cultivations; and further that I would not allow the squatters to pay any rents until the matter was finally arranged: that the Ngatiapas at once assented to these conditions, and formally handed over to me for sale whatever interests they might be found to have in the land; that the Ngatiraukawas and Rangitanes also, after some considerable demur, agreed to abandon the block and the non-payment of the rents, intimating at the same time their determination neither themselves to sell the block, nor to permit the Ngatiapas to alienate any portion of it; and that I expressed my belief that if the agreement thus entered into was abided by, not many months would elapse before a compromise would be come to.

I have now the satisfaction to report that the arrangements then made have been upon the whole very faithfully adhered to by the contending tribes, and that my anticipations as to the effect of them have been most fully realized.

The principal chiefs of the Rangitanes and Ngatiraukawas some time since came to the conclusion that the only way of settling the dispute was by a sale of the Block, and they quietly set themselves to work to convert their people to the same opinion. The payment of twelve thousand pounds to the Rangitanes for the Upper Manawatu Block no doubt tended very materially to hasten the conversion of the opponents of the sale. Some were disappointed at not getting any portion of the purchase money, others sore at not obtaining what they considered their fair share, and there were very few who were not tempted by the distribution of so large a sum to agree to the sale of the Rangitikei Block. Defectives from the ranks of the anti-sellers began to take place so rapidly that the leading chiefs determined to lose no time in offering the Block. They first however sent presents to the Ngatiapas as an intimation of their desire to make peace. The Ngatiapas accepted these presents, and invited the Rangitanes and Ngatiraukawas to meet them at Parawhenua (at Rangitikei.)

On the 17th of September, Ihakara and other chiefs addressed a letter to me (copy annexed) in which they placed the Block in my hands for sale to the Government. This was followed by letters from other chiefs to the same effect.

On the 12th of October, I met the Ngatiraukawa and Rangitane chiefs by appointment at Manawatu. There were twelve or fifteen present, besides some twenty or thirty Natives of inferior rank. Ihakara opened the proceedings in a temperate speech, the purport of which was that they had come formally to surrender the land into my hands, but that they still had to obtain the consent of the people, which probably would take two or three months. The other chiefs one after another got up and made a similar surrender. Some of them protested against the Ngatiapas being allowed to sign the deed of sale, but there was an entire absence of angry or even unkindly feeling towards them. There was on the contrary a tacit admission that the Ngatiapas had undoubted claims, and would be entitled to a share of the purchase money. In reply I sketched the history of the dispute, referred to the agreement entered into between the three tribes and myself in January last, and expressed my satisfaction at the faithful manner in which they had kept it. I then while accepting their offer, subject to their obtaining the consent of their people, reminded them that I had in January accepted whatever interests the Ngatiapa might be found to have in the block, and that I now repeated my determination to respect and maintain those interests. Ihakara and others then urged me to allow them to receive the rents, but when I